

**MARVEL**

MARK WAID

MIKE WIERINGO

KARL KESEL

63

# FANTASTIC FOUR

"Σππ'ΣΠ+"  
PART 2 of 3



RRG!  
ISANOVE



# THE FANTASTIC FOUR

**1** A team—and a family—of adventurers, explorers and imaginants, the Fantastic Four live lives both ordinary—and extraordinary.

As of today:

**2** In a desperate attempt to grow him up, Sue put Johnny in charge of the financial operations of FF Inc., the team's licensing and revenue arm. He is, of course, being supervised...by two resentful suits scheming to make themselves look good at Johnny's expense.

**3** Meanwhile, Sue and Ben have been attacked by a mysterious creature. It



has the power to separate objects—and people—into their raw chemical components.

**4** Sue learned this too late.



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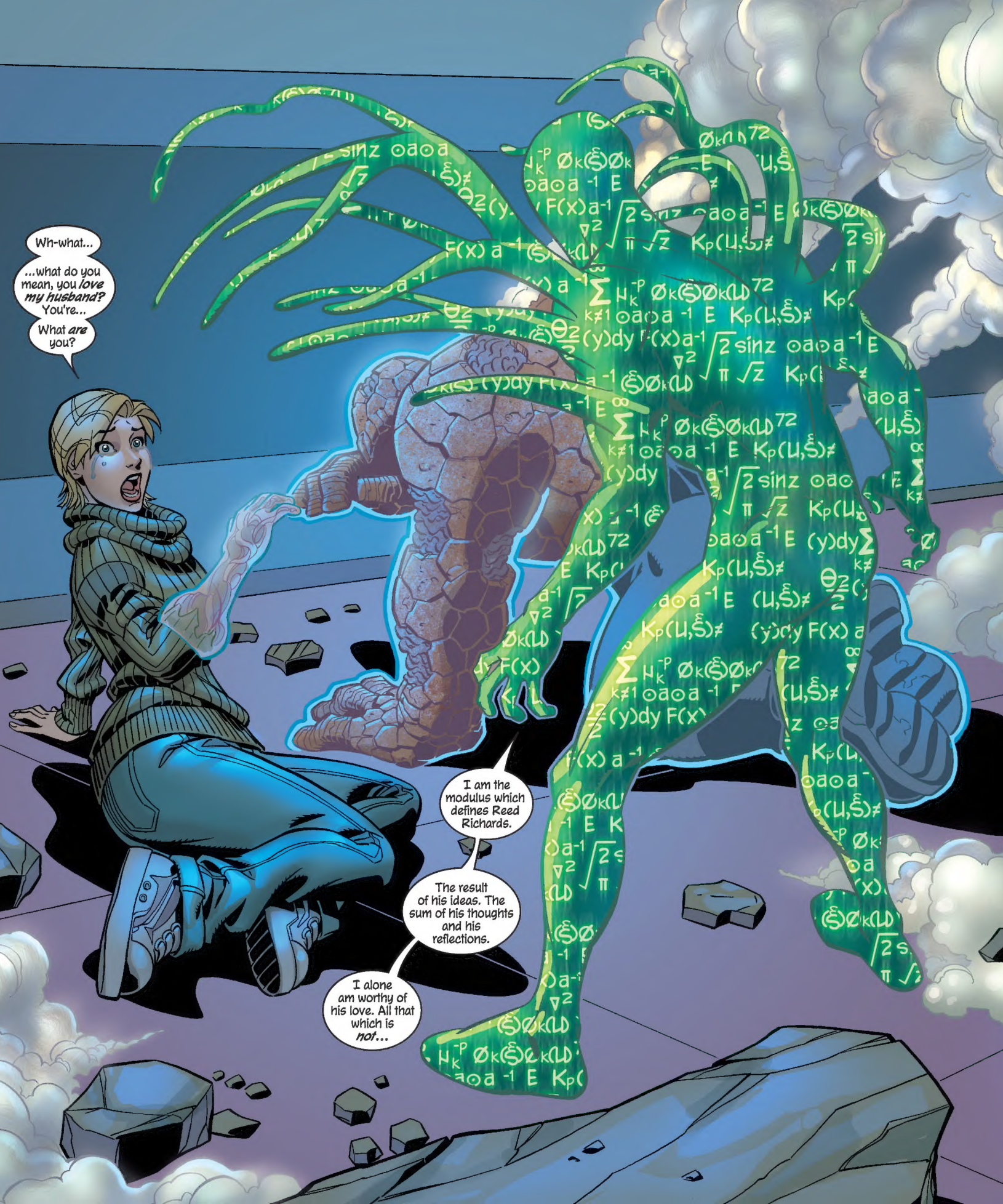
BILL JEMAS  
president

STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY  
the prime equation

**PART**  
**2 of 3**

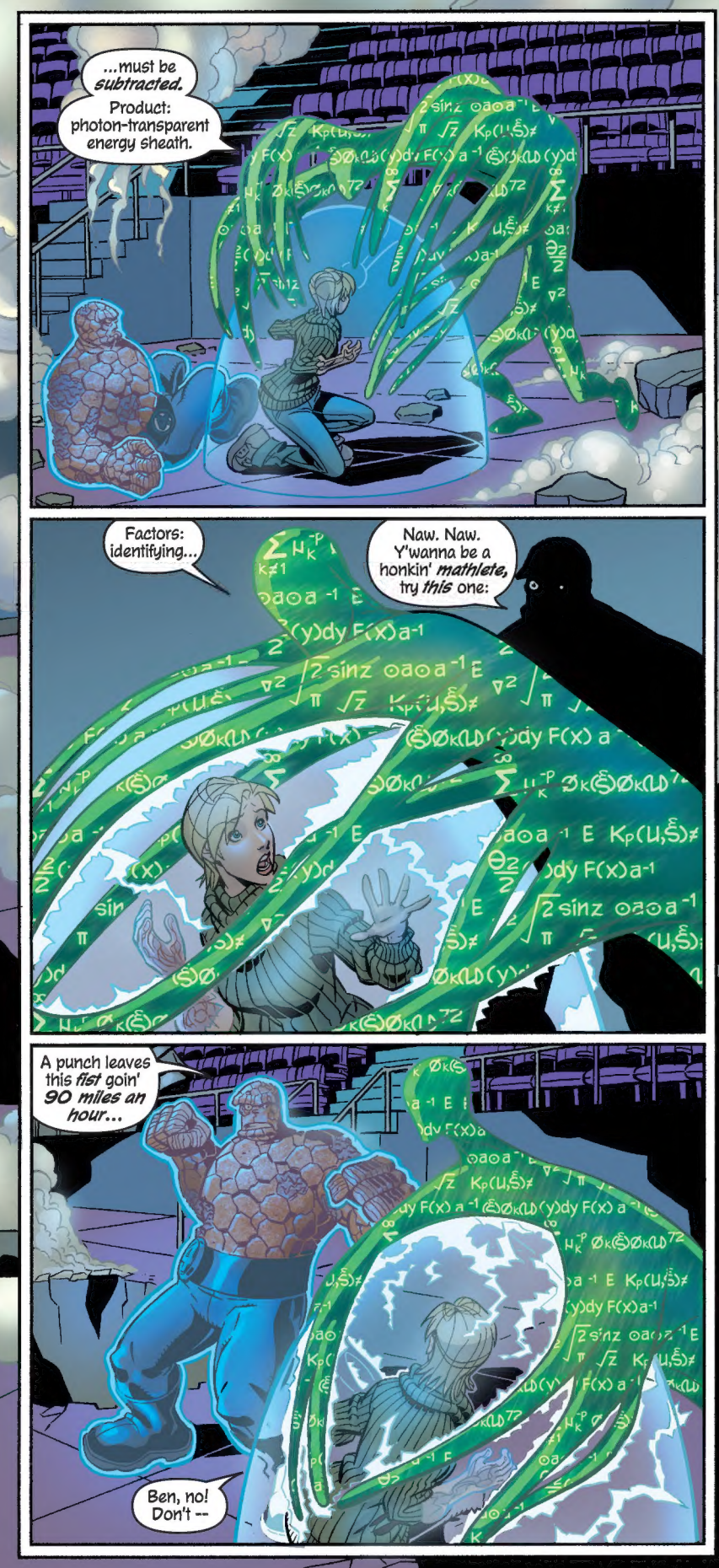
STAN LEE PRESENTS  
"Sensit'ΣII+"





Wh-what...  
...what do you mean, you *love* my husband? You're...  
What are you?

I am the modulus which defines Reed Richards.  
The result of his ideas. The sum of his thoughts and his reflections.  
I alone am worthy of his love. All that which is *not*...



...must be subtracted.  
Product:  
photon-transparent energy sheath.

Factors:  
identifying...

Naw. Naw.  
Y'wanna be a honkin' *mathlete*, try *this* one:

A punch leaves this fist goin' *90 miles an hour*...

Ben, no! Don't --



# THOOM

AAAAAAHHH!

SUZIE!

Ben, I'm... holding you together... with a force field...

Aw, cripes. An' I hit from *inside* it, you get walloped by th' feedback.

Suzie, I wasn't thinkin'. How do we *fight* this thing?

I don't know. Where'd it go?

Search me -- but I bet it's after Reed or Matchstick. We better warn 'em.

Can't. My commlink's not working.

Ditto. Awright, we gotta get you home while you still got a *hand*. We'll put in a call t' Johnny from there. 'Til then...





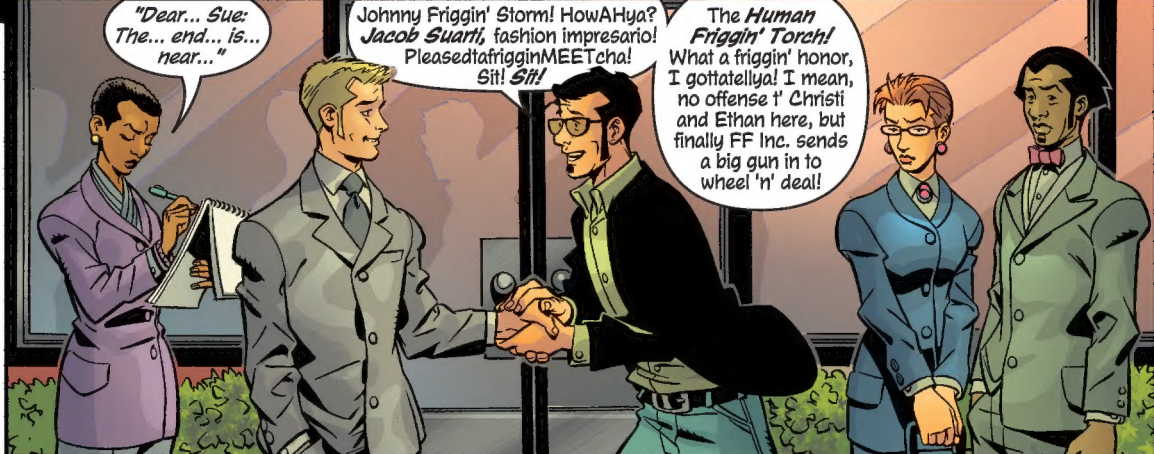
"...he's on his own."

Jian, remember how being stuck as an office suit used to make me a real hater?

I can cast my memory *back* two minutes, yes.

I was insane. Take a letter:

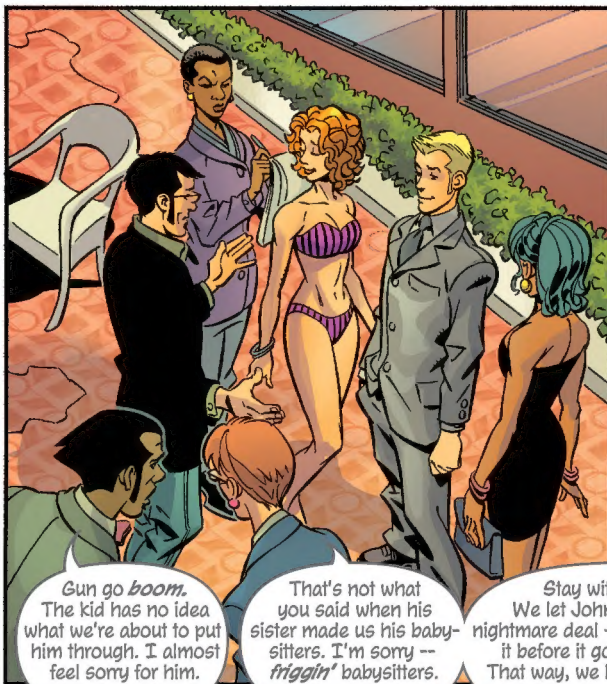
"Dear Sue: Good call on this job thing, I'm ready for more control."



"Dear... Sue: The... end... is... near..."

Johnny Friggin' Storm! HowAHya? Jacob Suarti, fashion impresario! PleasedtafrigginMEETcha! Sit! Sit!

The Human Friggin' Torch! What a friggin' honor, I gottatellya! I mean, no offense t' Christi and Ethan here, but finally FF Inc. sends a big gun in to wheel 'n' deal!



Gun go boom. The kid has no idea what we're about to put him through. I almost feel sorry for him.

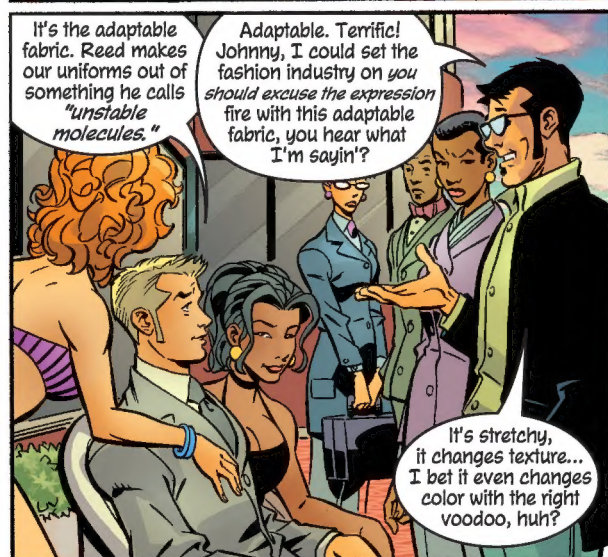
That's not what you said when his sister made us his babysitters. I'm sorry -- friggin' babysitters.

Stay with the plan. We let Johnny broker this nightmare deal -- then we intercept it before it goes catastrophic. That way, we look like geniuses.

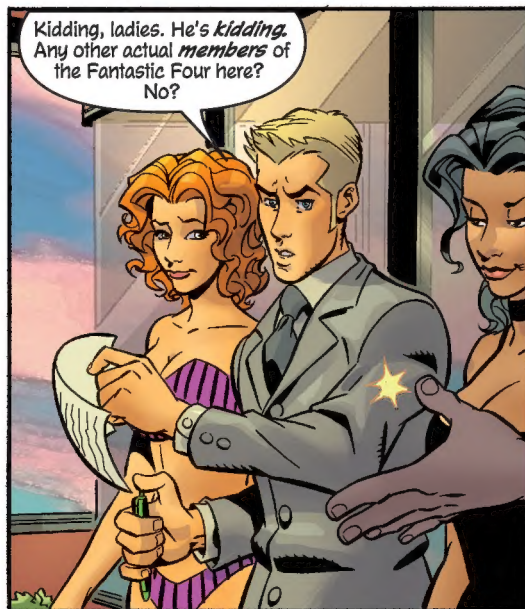
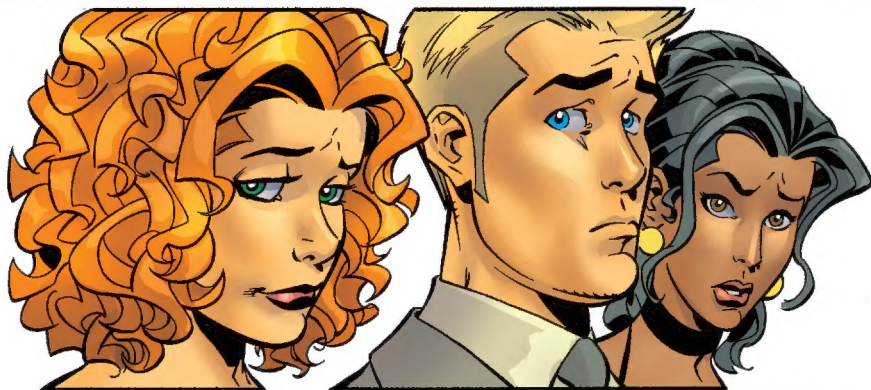
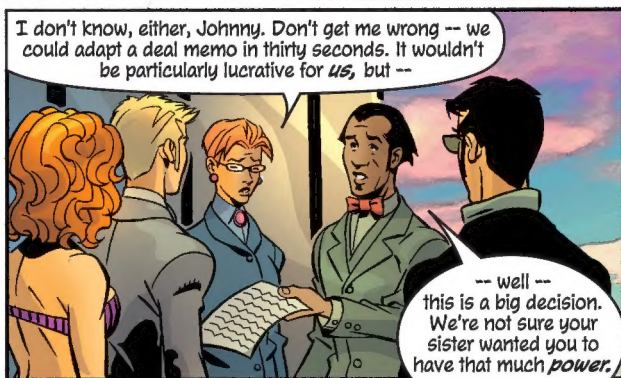
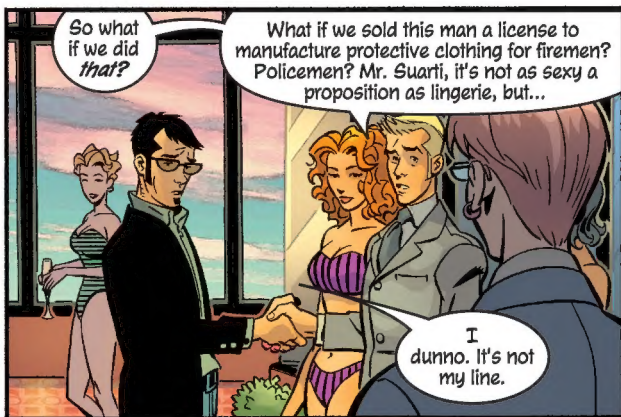
Extra added value: Sue Richards drags her kid brother out of our lives by the ear.

This is going to be a thing of beauty...

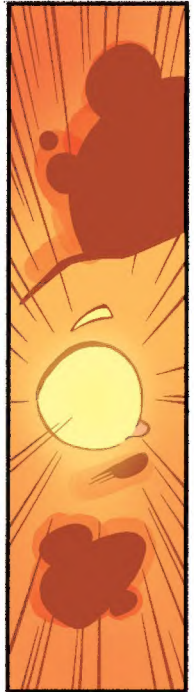
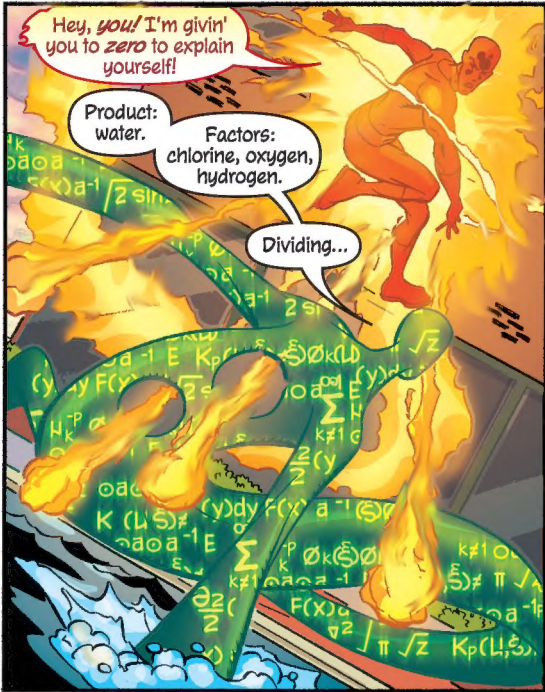
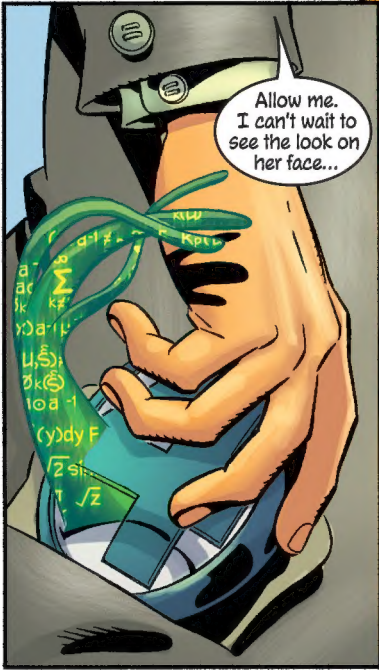




















Sue...

...give me your hand.

I swear, he -- he just turned it into *gas* with a *touch*. I managed to save it with a force field, but -- but --

Honey, don't worry. Based on what you and Ben reported, I'm confident I can restore it good as new given a little time. It's just a matter of rebounding its molecules.

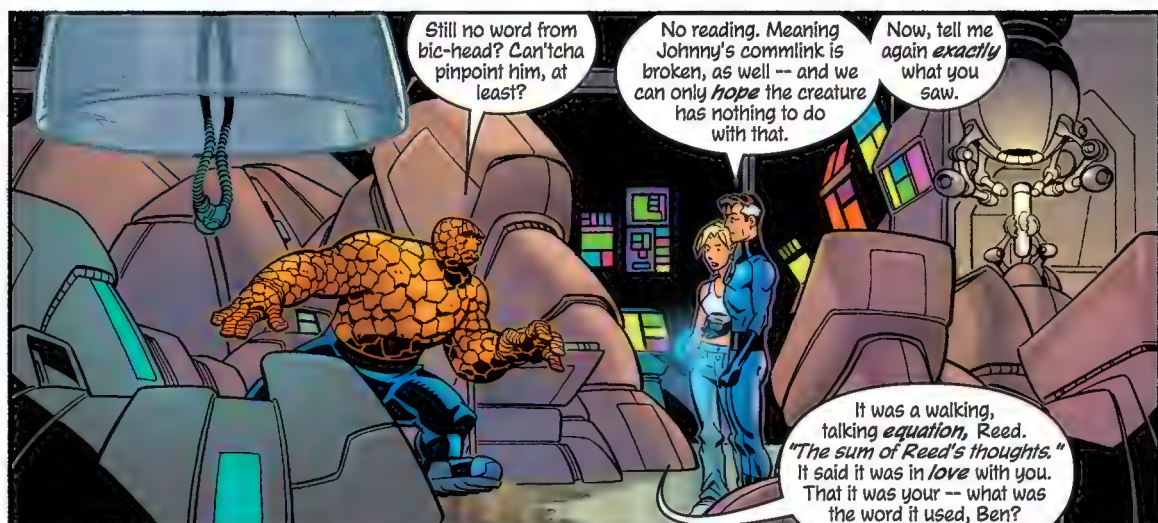
Ben, you okay in there?

How long I gotta bathe in this stuff? I'm gettin' wrinkly!

Joke.

Actually, you're done. This treatment replaced the binding silicates the creature stripped from your petridermis. Come on out.



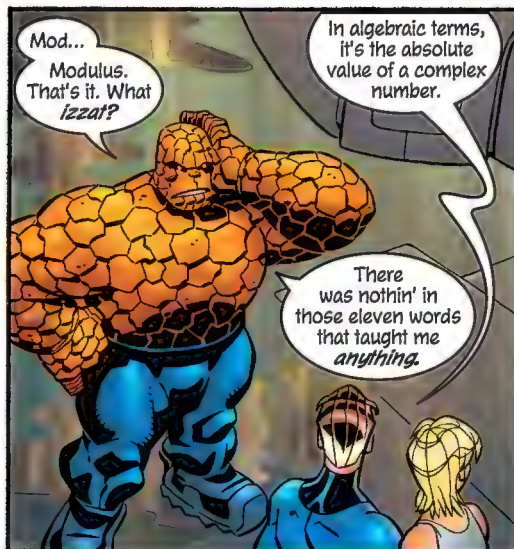


Still no word from bic-head? Can'tcha pinpoint him, at least?

No reading. Meaning Johnny's commlink is broken, as well -- and we can only *hope* the creature has nothing to do with that.

Now, tell me again *exactly* what you saw.

It was a walking, talking *equation*, Reed. "The sum of Reed's thoughts." It said it was in *love* with you. That it was your -- what was the word it used, Ben?



Mod...  
Modulus.  
That's it. What izzat?

In algebraic terms, it's the absolute value of a complex number.

There was nothin' in those eleven words that taught me *anything*.



No matter. It sounds as though the term was meant more figuratively than literally. Can you be more specific about what this construct *looked* like?

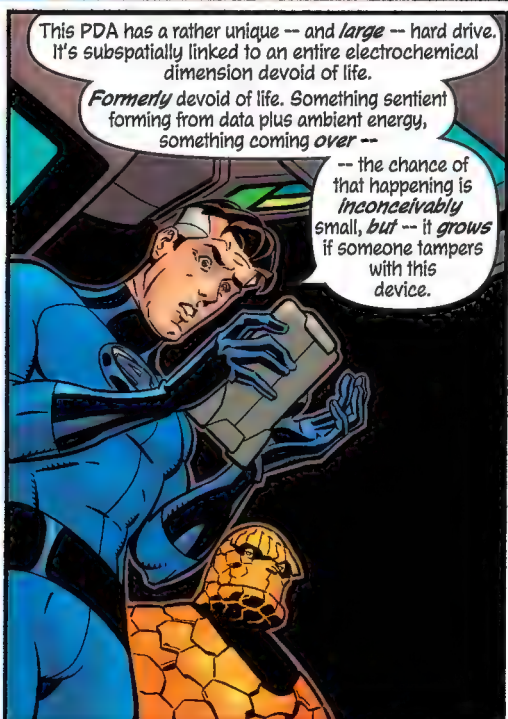
Oh, my God. Yes. Yes, we can.

I --



It was *this*. It was just like the screen on your electronic *notepad*! This is where you do your calculations -- didn't you say they were stored in another *reality* or something?

No.  
Oh, *no*.

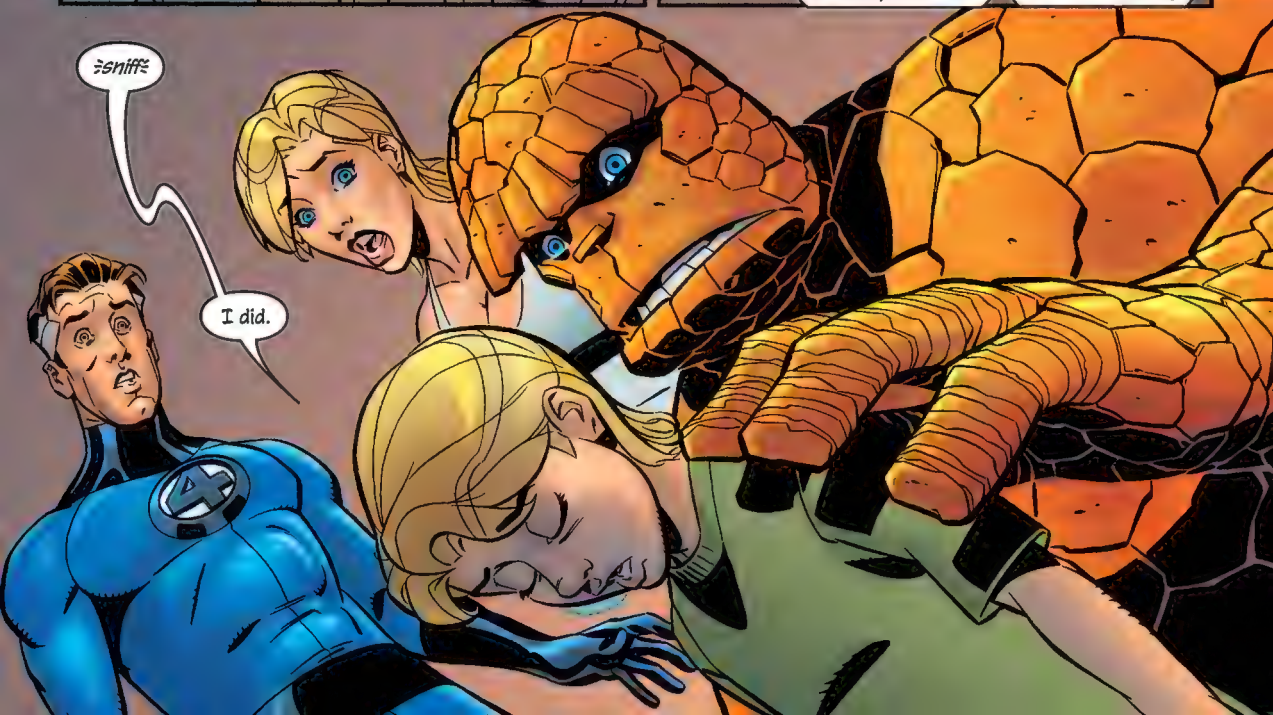
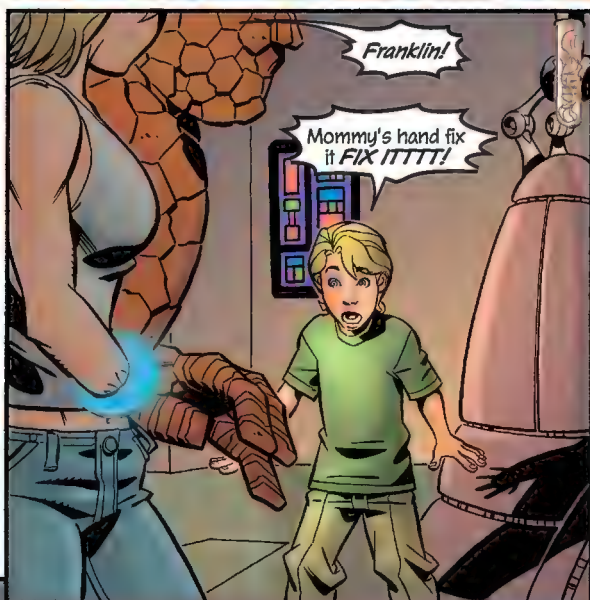
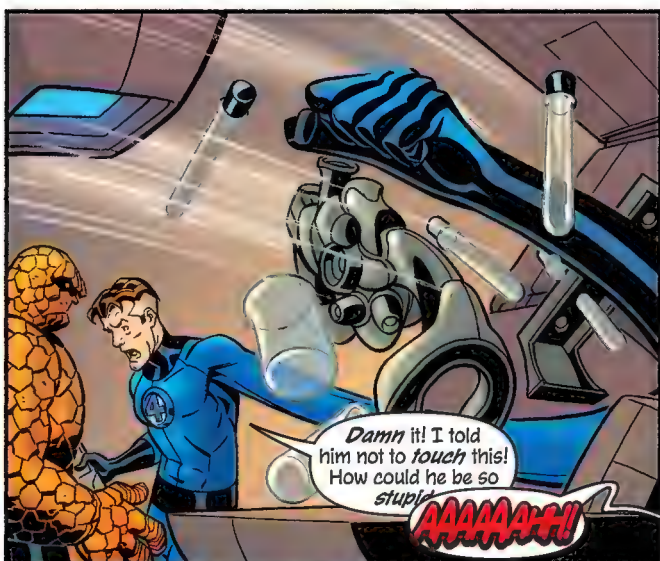


This PDA has a rather unique -- and *large* -- hard drive. It's substantially linked to an entire electrochemical dimension devoid of life.

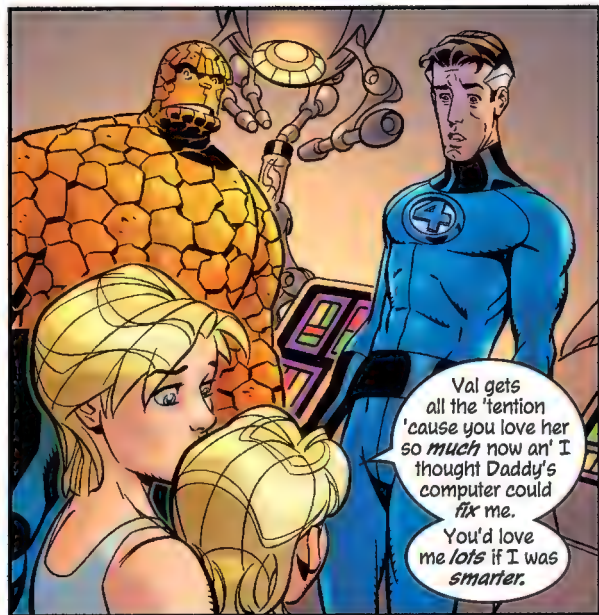
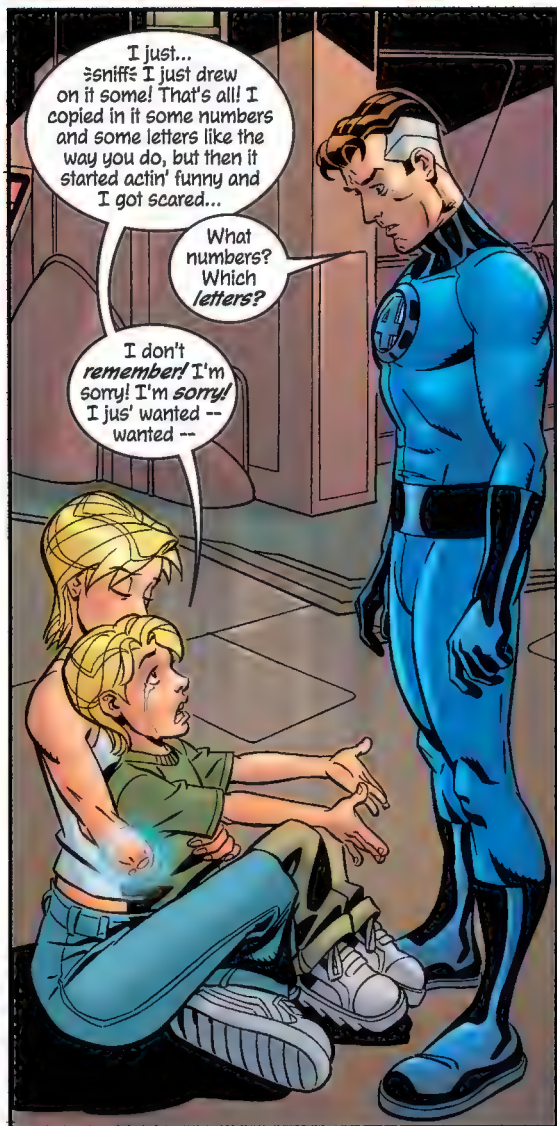
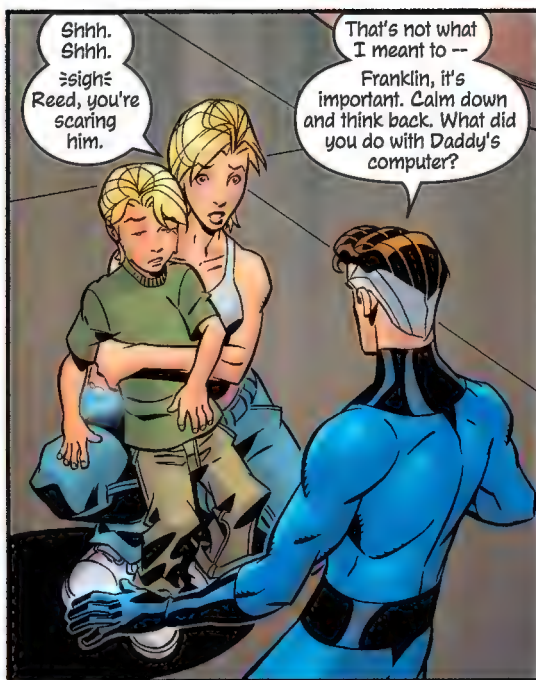
*Formerly* devoid of life. Something sentient forming from data plus ambient energy, something coming *over* --

-- the chance of that happening is *inconceivably* small, *but* -- it *grows* if someone tampers with this device.

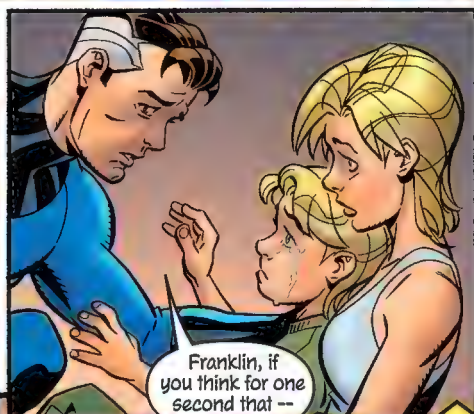
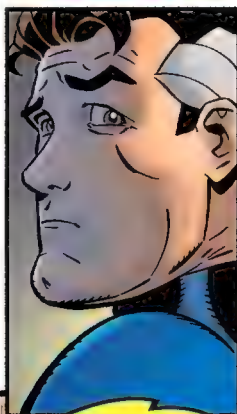
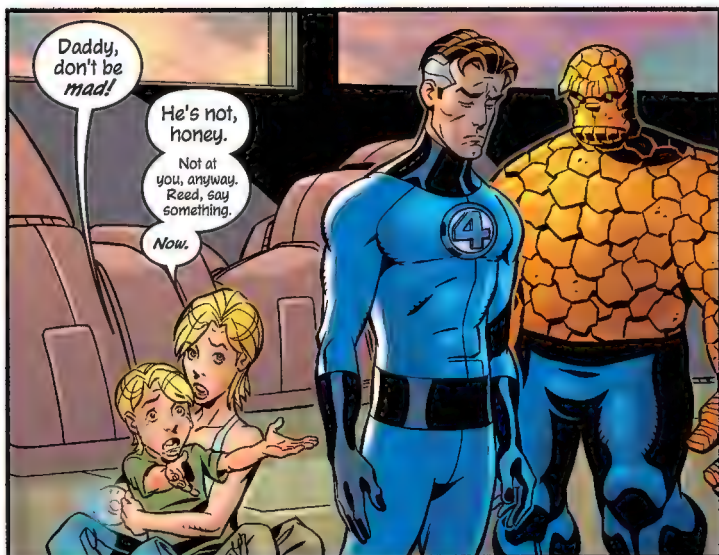
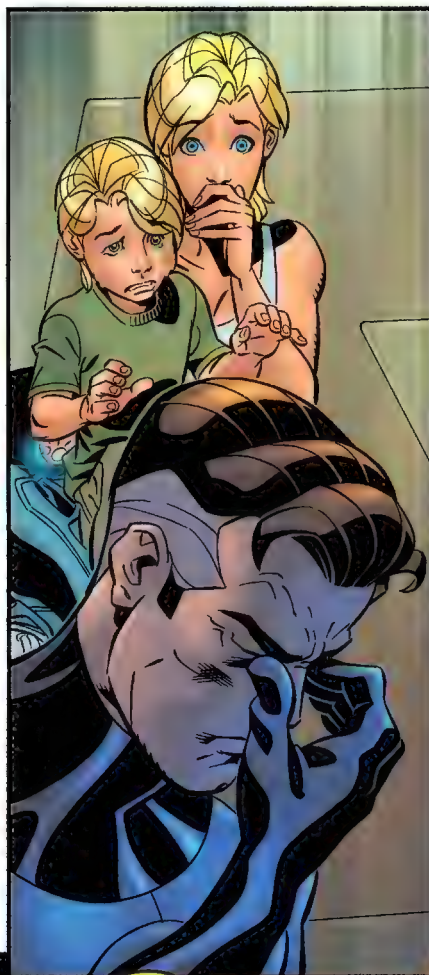




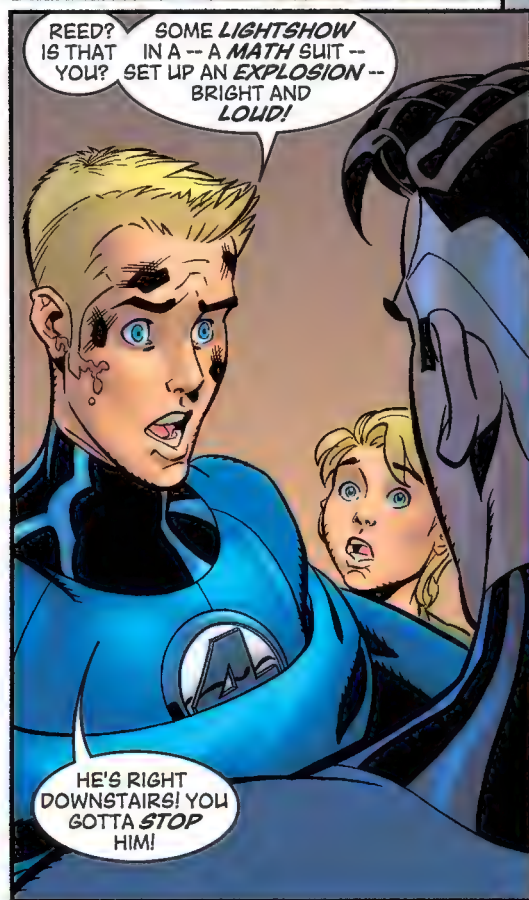




















Dividing...



Fascinating...!

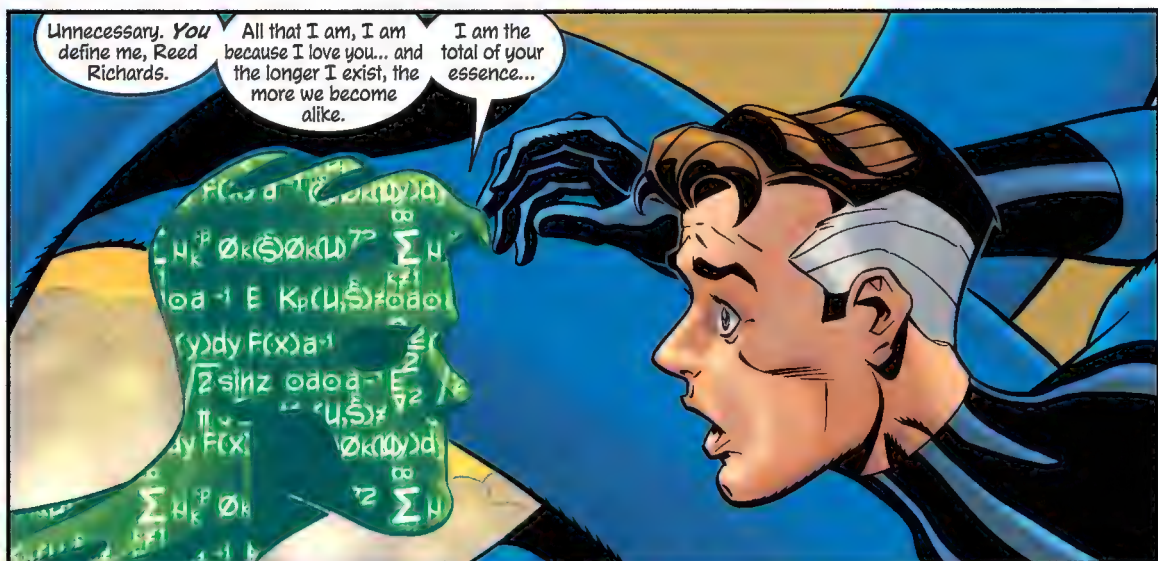
Not the  
adjective I would  
have used. Ben, a  
little help here?



Modulus! Whatever  
you are, precisely, you  
cannot help but be  
*logical!*

You were  
brought here by  
accident! There is no  
rationale for attacking my  
*home* and my *family!*  
Therefore, define your  
function -- *now!*





Unnecessary. *You* define me, Reed Richards.

All that I am, I am because I love you... and the longer I exist, the more we become alike.

I am the total of your essence...



...and you are the solution to my loneliness.



Know me.



What's to know? Math *sucks*? Big surprise!

Couldn't keep me outta the fight for long, could'ja? Step back, you...

...equation... guy... you!





Reed!  
Reed, snap  
out of it!

REED!

Ain't no  
use, Suzie!  
I think he's  
in *shock*!

You heard  
him, though... one  
crisis at a time! Me,  
I've had enuffa this  
creep, and that  
means only one  
thing:



It's  
CLOBBERIN'  
TIME!

Product:  
atmosphere.

Factors:  
nitrogen, oxygen,  
carbon dioxide,  
argon.

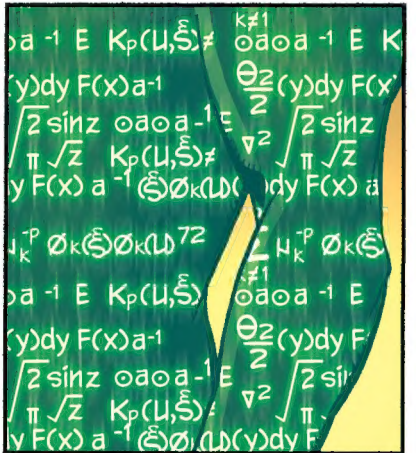
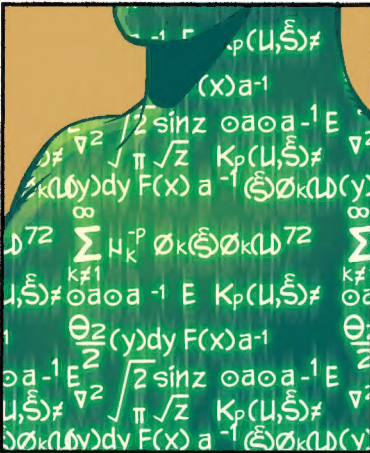
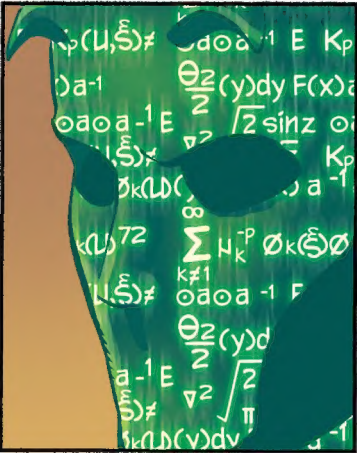
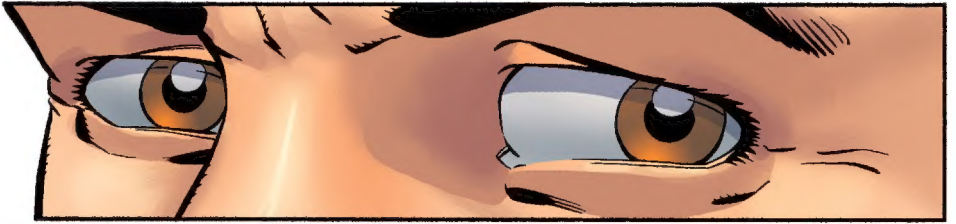
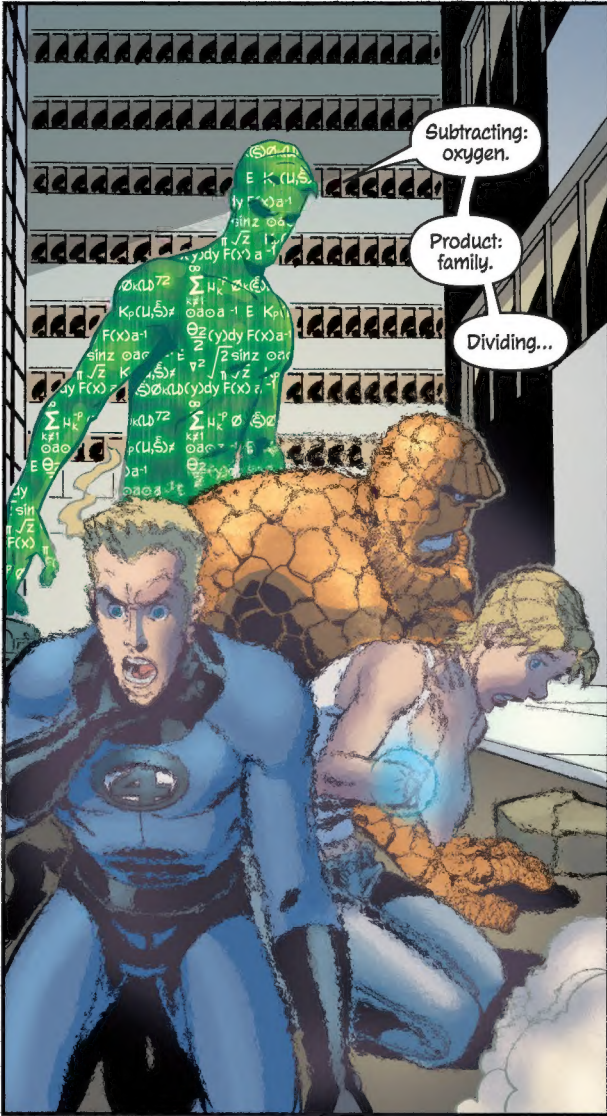


Dividing...

GGGGGGG

HHK-k-kk

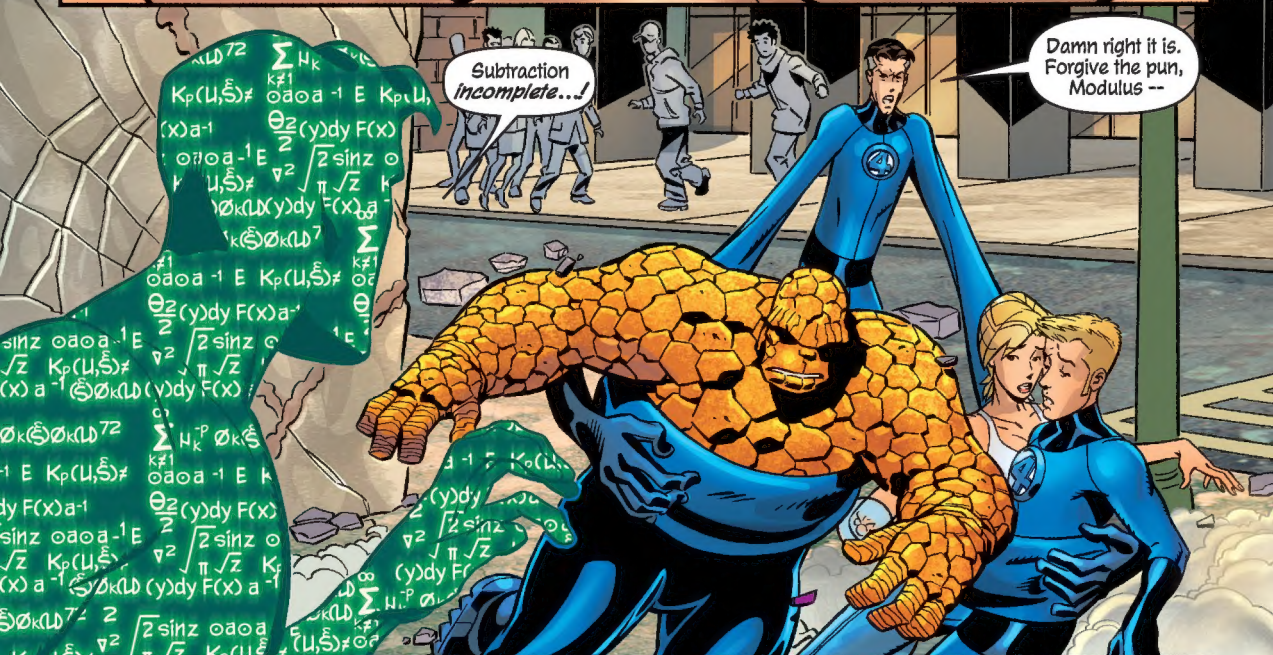








Of course.



Subtraction  
incomplete...!

Damn right it is.  
Forgive the pun,  
Modulus --



-- but I've got  
your *number*.  
Ben! Johnny! Hold  
Modulus off as long as  
you can! Sue, come with  
me! And all of you --  
*learn some algebra!*

Huh?

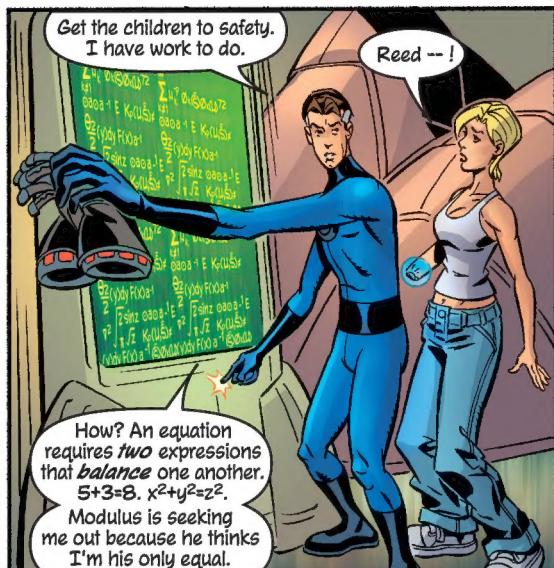


Modulus. The  
description each of  
you gave of him was  
almost the death  
of us.

He's a  
walking  
equation!

No, he's  
*not*.







# 4 THOUGHTS

Hello there, Faithful Followers of the Four!  
It's time to open the mailbag once again... 'cause it's still overflowing with your responses about FANTASTIC FOUR #60 (you do realize we've put out three more issues after that one, right?!)

Your words of kindness about our 9-cent issue have got the entire creative team blushing! So since I'm too flattered to speak (and since you probably heard enough from me last month), I'll just let you do the talking from here on out!

Dear 4-Thoughts,

I had never even thought about reading a Marvel comic, but then the manager of the comic store sneaked a free issue of FANTASTIC FOUR #60 into my bag, and boy was I impressed! Mark Waid is one of my favorite writers, and he's combined with the excellent Mike Wieringo to produce some funny panels and the heart-breaking moment when Reed explained to his baby why he had hired the PR firm. Not many people could carry as much guilt as it was evident that Richards does.

This issue has changed my view about Marvel, and I will definitely be checking out some FANTASTIC FOUR comics in the future. I also seem to be developing a worrying fixation on Sue Richards.

Oliver Bain  
United Kingdom

Dear Team Fantastic,

I can't believe my eyes! The FF hasn't been this much fun to read in ages! This is by far the greatest creative team to grace these pages since the likes of Stan and Jack! Never before has Reed had his character changed in so great a way—and yet not out of character. Thank you so much for putting the FF back at the top of my "monthly must-haves" list!

Oh, just so you know, I took full advantage of the 9-cent price tag on this issue and bought two hundred to pass out to family and friends who may have never read a comic. So far, the reactions have been overwhelmingly positive! I even convinced a comic-hating friend of mine to read it... and whereas he's still not a card-carrying member of comic fandom, he's told me he'll definitely pick up the next issue!

Until the FF decide to give up their unstable molecules for Velcro, Make Mine Marvel!

Jeremy Dale  
Kokomo, IN

4-Thoughts,

This is great. Someone finally hit the nail on the head: you now know what makes the FF such a favorite. This issue was exceedingly well written and entertaining. Keep up the good work.

Genia Jarrett  
Stockbridge, GA

Thank you, Marvel Comics, for FANTASTIC FOUR #60!  
I'm a 7th/8th grade English Language Arts teacher

in lower New Hampshire who has been trying to integrate comic books into this year's curriculum. The list for such reasons runs on and on, I won't bore you, but I was having a terrible time finding a cost-effective means to bringing the marriage of visual/literary arts to the classroom. Unexpectedly, my comic book dealer from The Comic Shop in Oswego, NY added 90 copies of this fabulous issue to my monthly order.

Needless to say, FANTASTIC FOUR #60 fits right into the short story unit I'm creating and is an excellent tool for my visual learners! With 90 copies, each of my students can take a comic home and use it as a reader-writer connection. The unit calls for the deconstruction of plot, character analysis, and the use of dialogue, as well as other essential short story elements. This book has it all! Students will be learning to read, write, and create using this wonderful piece of pop-culture. I've already begun working on a school newspaper in which a few students are selected to create a short comic for publication. They're using FF #60 as a scaffold to creating their story and they're loving it. Again, this issue is a life saver.

I have parents and teachers commenting on students who are motivated and eager to learn. So thank you, Comic Shop, and thank you, Marvel Comics. Reading has and will continue to take a positive new turn for a great deal of my students thanks to you.

Brandon Wood  
(via e-mail)

Howdy, Tom, Marc, and Andy!

Besides being the best 9 cents I've ever spent, FF #60 was also a darn good read! Anticipation has been high to see what Mark Waid and Mike Wieringo could bring to the book, and it looks like the FF are in good hands.

I've heard "perfect jumping-on point for new readers" tossed around in regards to many books in the past, but I think this was the best execution of that idea. Waid crafted a story that was not only entertaining for old readers, but that fully encapsulates the origin and essence of the FF in 22 short pages. We see who they are, where they came from, what they do, how they behave, and why they do it—all through the clever move of having Reed hire an image consultant to boost the public's perception of the team. It's clearly emphasized that these guys aren't super heroes, and we get to see a level of humanity in Reed that too many writers have neglected in the past.

Ringo's art is astounding and seems to be a perfect fit for that "fun and adventurous" emphasis that Waid seems to be placing on this book. Can't wait to see what else is in store for us!

Jared Moraitis  
Newton, NC

4-Thoughts,

This is the first time that I've felt compelled to write about a comic book or a creator. I have to say that I have never been a fan of Mark Waid. I've listened to the rumors and other stuff about him and pretty much believed them all. I always felt that he was a bit pompous and arrogant and not very in touch with what the people who read comics want. I didn't particularly care for his run on Flash (as a matter of fact Geoff Johns is still my favorite writer to work on that title) and when I heard that he was coming onto FF, I pretty much decided to cross that book off my buy list. However, after reading the first issue of FANTASTIC FOUR that he was involved with as well as his recent interview in Wizard magazine, I have come to realize that Mr. Waid is not much different from me or anyone else. He has a love of comics and a feel for these

characters along the same lines that I have. They are a family. After reading #60 I have to say that not only is FF permanently on my must-buy list from now at least until Mr. Waid leaves the book, but he has completely changed my mind about him. I wish Mr. Waid the best of luck on this book and on anything else that he may be working on, and I apologize for any slight that I have given you over the years.

Timothy P. Shelton  
(via e-mail)

Dear 4-Thoughts,

"World's Greatest Comics Magazine"? You bet. FF #60 was absolutely stunning from start to finish. Mark Waid's story was dead-on true to the essence of the characters, without ever seeming dated. It was all there: Ben's torment over his appearance, Johnny's hot-headed brashness and Reed's quiet guilt. And Sue!! I think this was the most personality Sue's had in a long time!

The story also had that great freewheeling humor, hipness and fun, flowing vibe that made the early days of Marvel such a joy. Several times I found myself laughing out loud, but page 22, panel 1 had tears streaming down my face—too rich!! Funniest scene in comics all year!!

The art was great too. I wasn't certain Wieringo's style would fit this book but he proved me happily wrong. Top shelf, Mike. Take a bow.

Incredible debut, folks. Pat yourselves on the back and keep it coming.

Dave Wrighteous  
Wilmington, DE

4-Thoughts,

I thought the 9-cent FANTASTIC FOUR issue was a great idea. I am an elementary art teacher and I bought 50 of them to give away as prizes in a "Draw a Super Hero Contest." I would have bought more if my comics store had ordered more. As a kid comics introduced me to a love of reading and art and I enjoy passing that along.

If you ever have any other inexpensive or free comics or comics-related posters, merchandise, etc., please let me know!

Andrew Wales  
Athens, PA

4-Thoughts,

Issue #60. 9 cents.

A masterpiece.

One of my favorite single issues ever.

Looking forward to reading more from the new team.

'Nuff Said.

Andres Baca  
Miami, FL

'Nuff said indeed!

That's it for this month, gang! Next time, we'll move on to your responses about FF #61!

Keep those letters coming!

Marc Sumerak  
Buried in Fan Mail



Cover colored by Richard Isanove

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**NEXT ISSUE:**  
IT'S THE FINAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN REED AND MODULUS... BUT WILL IT LEAVE OUR FAVORITE FAMILY "DIVIDED" FOR GOOD? FIND OUT IN "SENTIENT" PART 3 OF 3!